

7

AN
ADDRESS
TO THE
INHABITANTS OF NOTTINGHAM,
OCCASIONED BY
A LETTER
LATELY SENT TO
THE MAYOR, AND SOME OTHER MEMBERS OF THE
CORPORATION OF THAT TOWN.
WITH
AN APPENDIX,
ON THE
SUBJECT OF THE TEST-LAWS.

By GILBERT WAKEFIELD, B.A. *R*
And late Fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge.

Thou Hypocrite! first cast out the Beam out of thine own Eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the Mote out of thy Brother's Eye.--JESUS.

Who art thou that judgest another Man's Servant? To his own Master he standeth or falleth.—PAUL.

Let all Bitterness and Wrath,—be put away from you, with all Malice.—PAUL.

LONDON,
PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.
MDCCLXXXIX.

[PRICE ONE SHILLING.]



Advertisement to the Reader.

THE following *Address* and its *Appendix*, though occasioned by a local Incident, to which some Passages are particularly directed, have met with such Approbation elsewhere, as to be thought, from their Spirit and Tendency, capable of promoting the Cause of *Truth* and *Liberty*, beyond the Limits of our Town. Upon this Idea of their Utility in Vindication of these most noble Principles (whose Service, I hope, will ever be the highest Object of my Ambition) I cordially consent to the Republication of them, in Compliance with a Request from a most respectable Set of Gentlemen; whose Approbation of my Exertions has impressed a Gratification on my Feelings beyond my Power to express. They are accordingly re-printed with very few Alterations. And I gladly seize this Opportunity of explaining myself with respect to an Objection very generally made to these Pamphlets.

Many condemn as highly *unbecoming*, others *disapprove* as extremely *injudicious*, the Introduction of *religious Topics* into this Argument of the *Test-Laws*, which, it seems to their Wisdoms, might have

jogged on full as well without this Association. Possibly it might: and, to be sure, if I had set myself to this Office with a View of *pleasing Men* only, I should not have acted so preposterous a Part. But these *prudential Provisions*, these *smooth Processes*, are not congenial to the Constitution, which God has given *me*. I know very well, that the Majority of *Dissenters* are alas! doatingly enamoured of the *Trinitarian* and *Calvinistic* Doctrines of *Mother-Church*; and was aware, that the Minds of these *orthodox Non-Conformists* would be more *irritated* by my *Freedom* with these darling Articles of their *Creed*, than *soothed* by my *Zeal* for UNLIMITED TOLERATION in their Behalf. "Let but *our* Prejudices alone, and fall as foul as "you please upon those of *other* People;" is the secret Sentiment of these Sons of *Liberty*. It is only *that* Part of the Dissenters, which, with the Reader's Leave, I shall call the *liberal* and *enlightened* Part, because their ACTIONS entitle them to this honourable Distinction; it is ONLY THESE, I say, who have either improved on the Creed of their *Grandmothers*, or have, at least, the Magnanimity to approve and commend those who have.

But the Truth is, neither one nor the other, —neither he, whose *Bigotry* abhors, nor he, whose *Prudence* cannot commend, my Management of the Subject—fully apprehended my Views on this Occasion

Advertisement.

caſion, though intimated in the Beginning of the *Addeſs*. They were theſe; and I ſee no Reaſon to repent of them.

I have been long deſirous of directing the Attention of this Town and Neighbourhood to thoſe capital Articles of *religious Faith*, which have been of late Years ſo much diſcuſſed in the literary World, without gaining any adequate Share of Conſideration in remote Country Places. Experience convinced me, that an Addreſs on theſe Subjects, unaffiſted by ſome Circumſtances of general Curioſity in the Place, would meet with total Neglect but from thoſe habitually inquiſitive and liberal, who wanted no Addition to *their* Conviction on ſuch Points. Nor could I but conſider the recent Agitation, excited in our Town by the Letters of the *Junior-Council*, as a favourable Criſis for the Execution of my Intentions. *Such* was my Object in writing my *Addreſs*. And let no Man attempt to conſtrain to the Standard of his own peculiar Ideas and Inclinations one, who knows no Influence but that of a *probable Benefit* to the Interests of *Humanity* and *Religion*. Deſirous, accordingly, of ſerving my Townſmen, as *Citizens* MUCH, but as *Chriſtians* MORE, I blended theſe Topics of *Toleration* and *Divinity*; which I humbly think, notwithſtanding, have ſome *little* Connection with each other;

other ; and I expressed myself with a more than ordinary Degree of Earnestness and Vigour, that I might by all Means *rouse* some. But my Fellow-Citizens, it should seem, like the *Dreams* of their *deep Sleep*, better than my *waking Reveries*: and I shall leave them to the peaceable Enjoyment of what, I *am confident*, they do not understand, and what, I *think*, they are rather *unable* than *unwilling* to defend. Indeed, an unfledged Noviciate in Divinity, just hopped from his *Academical Nest*, has been buzzing, I am told, a Pulpit Harangue upon the Sensorium of his gaping Congregation; but the Vibration has not proved strong enough to propagate itself beyond the Doors of his Auditory, so as to be heard amidst the Elements without. — Peace be to the Orator, the Oration, and the Audience! Peace to *Demetrius* and his *Craftsmen*; and to every other honest Man, who labours in his *Calling*! — Reader, farewell!

11 AP 66

Nottingham,
Nov. 25, 1789.

ADVERTISEMENT.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The following is a Copy of one of the Letters mentioned
in the Title-Page of this Pamphlet.

‘ William Smith, Esq. Mayor, Nottingham.

‘ Nottingham, 21st October, 1789.

‘ *THE Junior Council** present their most
‘ respectful Compliments to the Mayor of Nottingham;
‘ take Leave to inform him, ’tis with Pain they have
‘ observed, that a total Disregard to the qualifying Laws
‘ for Offices has for some time taken Place in this Town.
‘ They therefore give him this timely Information, that
‘ if he neglects to qualify for his Office, they shall feel
‘ themselves obliged to enforce a Law, which they think
‘ founded in Wisdom.

‘ In this Address the Junior Council disclaim the
‘ smallest Animosity to the Mayor. They take up this
‘ Affair upon public Ground—In Defence of the Laws
‘ and Constitution of their Country.’

* This Body consists of the six following Gentlemen: Thomas
Frost, Esq. Cornelius Launder, Esq. John Morris, Esq. Mr. Thomas
Rawson in Houndgate, Mr. John Alleyne, and Mr. Sterland.

AN

STATEMENT

The undersigned is a member of the Board of Directors of the

of the City of New York, and has the honor to acknowledge the

of the City of New York, and has the honor to acknowledge the

11 AP 66

of the City of New York, and has the honor to acknowledge the

of the City of New York, and has the honor to acknowledge the

of the City of New York, and has the honor to acknowledge the

of the City of New York, and has the honor to acknowledge the

AN
ADDRESS
TO THE
INHABITANTS OF NOTTINGHAM, &c.

FELLOW-CITIZENS,

IN whatever Light we may severally view the Letter prefixed to this Pamphlet, which will be very different, I presume, according to our different Habits of Life and Modes of thinking; it furnishes me with an Opportunity of communicating my Thoughts to you upon Subjects, which probably very few of us have considered with sufficient seriousness; and of suggesting some ideas, which may not have presented themselves before, to those who are constantly engaged in the Businesses of Life, and have but little Leisure for Reflections of this Nature. I shall think my Pains laudably bestowed, and incur, if it should so fall out, whatever Odium with Pleasure*, if by any Exertions I can rectify the Disposition, inform the Understanding, or enlarge the Heart, of a single Individual among you. I shall lay my Observations before you, as they naturally arise from the subject, and in the plainest Language. Reputation is not my Object, but your Information and Welfare only. Should I express myself with a Warmth and Energy inspired by the Subject, do not mistake, as many of cool and timid Feelings are but too apt to mistake, *Earnestness* for *Passion*; but consider the great Importance of the Argument, which *cannot* be debated by a Man of Sensibility with Tameness and Indifference; listen with Patience; judge with Candour; and follow with Spirit the free Dictates of your own Understandings.

* John xv. 18, 19.

Many of you, I dare say, are unacquainted with the Nature of the *Test-Act*, to which our *Junior-Council* are endeavouring to compel the *Mayor* and some of the *Corporation* to conform. This Act, which was passed in the Reign of *Charles the Second*, "directs, among other Things, all *Officers civil* and military, within six Calendar Months after their Admission to receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, according to the Usage of the Church of *England*, in some public Church, immediately after divine Service, and to deliver into Court a Certificate thereof signed by the Minister and Church-Warden, and also to prove the same by two credible Witnesses; upon Forfeiture of 500*l.* and Disability to hold the said Office."

Such is the Injunction of this Act; and the Intention of it professes to be, "the Security of the established Church against Perils of *Non-Conformists* of all Denominations."

Now it is well known, that our present chief Magistrate, and many of his Brethren in Authority, are *Dissenters* from the Worship of the *established Church*, and addicted, we have Reason to believe, to their own religious Faith with as much Attachment, and upon Inducements as conscientious, as a *Church-of-England-Man* to his. You see then the Difficulty, to which these Gentlemen are reduced by this Determination of the *Junior-Council*. They must either conform to a Ceremony against their Consciences, and thus offend the supreme Being by a profane Prostitution of a most serious and solemn Act — or pay a Penalty of 500*l.* and give up an Office, to which they have been chosen by the proper Authority — or suffer the Consequences of a Prosecution. How far this Conduct of the *Junior-Council* is defensible upon any Principles of *Religion* or *Liberality*, or even of *Common-Sense*, you will be better enabled to decide by the Assistance of the following Remarks: which I do not wish you to regard further than they appear just and reasonable to your Apprehension. I pretend to no extraordinary Discernment, and am very liable to Error. *Truth* indeed I have been seeking for many years in preference to every other Consideration, with such Zeal and Earnestness and so many Assistances of Books and Conversation as fall to the Lot of very few.

Still

Still the Fruits of my Assiduity and Opportunities may be but *Error* : And I am willing to remove from me the Guilt of misleading Others by this timely and repeated Caution of careful and disinterested Examination.

This *Test-Act*, you will perceive from a slight Examination of it, rests for its Support upon *two* Principles, and must stand or fall with rational Men by the Truth or Falshood of these its Supporters.

The *first* Principle is evidently this :

1. That the *Magistrate*, or ruling Power of a Nation, has a *Right* to enquire into the *Religious Opinions* of his Subjects, to *prescribe Rules* for the Regulation of these Opinions, and to *demand a Declaration* of them.

The *second* Principle is this :

2. That the *religious Faith* of our *Governors*, or that established by Law in the *Church of England*, is the *true Religion* delivered in the Scriptures, by *Moses* and the *Prophets* in the *Old Testament*, and by *Christ* and his *Apostles* in the *New*.

These *two* Principles, I say, are the Foundation upon which the *Test-Act* is builded ; and, if the Foundation be sandy, the Building must tumble down. So far no Man can oppose us.—But let me once more before I begin, entreat your most earnest and dispassionate Attention, whilst I enquire into the Merits of *both* the Propositions above stated.

I. The *Arrogance*, the *Absurdity*, and the *Falshood* of the First, viz. that “the Jurisdiction of the *Magistrate* extends “to our *Religion* and our *Consciences*,” may be undeniably made out in such a Variety of Ways, that I am only perplexed how to select the plainest and most forcible of the numerous Arguments, which present themselves to my Notice.

1. Every Man, who consults his own Mind, must feel an immediate Conviction, that he is not so far Master of his Faculties as to *believe* or *disbelieve* any Point at Pleasure. He is *compelled*, as a reasonable Creature, to accommodate his Belief, and receive his Conviction, according to the Evidence presented to his Understanding. As no *Kings*

or *Parliaments* upon Earth can persuade or force you to think it *Midnight*, when your Eye tells you that it is *Noon Day*; so, when the Eye of your Mind perceives the Truth, or Falsity of any Proposition, no human Power, not even *yourselves*, can alter or controul your Conviction in this Instance. You may prevaricate indeed, and attempt to impose upon yourselves or others; but *Prevarication* and *Concealment*, will not confound the Truth of Things; will not counteract the unconquerable Efficacy of your secret Feelings, and convert your Judgment. Is it possible then for Language to expose with sufficient Powers of Expression that *Folly*, by which the *Magistrate* would force *Conviction*, and inculcate *Truth*, not by the Strength of *Arguments*, but the Severities of *Law*?

But these Attempts of the Magistrate are not merely *foolish* and *ineffectual*, beginning in *Error* and ending in *Vanity*; but *presumptuous* and *profane*.

THE SUPREME BEING has gifted his Creature Man with certain Faculties, capable of particular Exertions, and susceptible of Impressions by Means adapted to their Nature. The Faculty, which distinguishes us from the brute Creation we call *Reason*; and this can be improved only by such Methods as are suitable to that Sense and Understanding, of which we are all conscious in our several Proportions. But will *Confinement in a Prison*, or the *Payment of a Fine*, enlighten your *Understandings*, or strengthen your *Conviction* of the Truths of *Christianity*, or any other Truths whatever? And does not the Man, who employs such preposterous Means for these Ends, offer Violence to human Nature? Does he not resist and subvert, as far as he can, those Laws, which the ALMIGHTY has established for the Regulation of his Creatures? Certainly it is no less Guilt, than that of an audacious Rebellion against the divine Administration, to oppose his Constitution of Things; to fetter that Energy of the Mind, which God has made free, and which will continue uncontrollable, as long as the *Creator* continues more powerful than his *Creatures*, and able to support his own System against the arbitrary and spiteful Interference of weak and wicked Men.

2. Again: Whatever Power possesses a Right to prescribe Laws for my Conduct, must also have a Right to sit
in

in Judgment upon that Conduct, and punish my Disobedience to his Laws. This is manifest beyond Dispute. Therefore, if the *King* and *Parliament* have a Right to regulate my Faith, and to prescribe that System of Morality and Religion, which I ought to believe and practise, it most certainly follows, that my secret *Thoughts*, my private *Meditations*, and every Action of my Life, all which should be conducted under the immediate and perpetual Influence of *religious Principles*, must submit to the Examination and Sentence of the same Tribunal. But surely no *Christian* need to be told, that God, who alone knoweth and *searcheth the Heart*, has committed this Office not to *Kings* or any *earthly Potentates*, but to his SON, whom he hath appointed to judge, what no *Kings* and *Parliaments*, can ever know, *every secret Thing, whether it be good or evil**, when he shall come in the *Glory of his Father with the holy Angels†*.

How *Magistrates*, in the mean Time, ought to conduct themselves with Respect to this Business of *religious Opinion*, which breaks out into no *Acts* of Violence against his rightful Authority, our *Saviour* himself hath declared in the most positive and explicit Language. In the Parable of the Tares‡, when the Servants said unto the Householder, *Wilt thou that we go and gather them up?* He replies, with unexampled Wisdom, to their indiscreet Officiousness: *Nay: lest, while ye gather up the Tares, ye root up also the Wheat with them. LET BOTH GROW TOGETHER UNTIL THE HARVEST: and in the Time of Harvest, I will say to the Reapers, Gather ye together first the Tares, and bind them in Bundles to burn them; but gather the Wheat into my Barn.*

The Sense and Drift of this glorious Parable are so extremely obvious, that I shall not stay to make any farther Application of it, but leave it to your own Reflections. *Be WISE therefore, O! ye Kings: be instructed, ye Judges of the Earth.* (Psalm ii. 10.)

3. Farther: We believe, that the holy Scriptures contain every Thing necessary to the Faith and Practice of a *Christian*. We are exhorted by our Lord to *search these Scriptures* || — and *even of our own selves*

* Eccles. xii. 14.

† Mark viii. 38.

‡ Matt. xiii. 24—31.

|| John v. 39.

to judge what is right*: and many other Declarations to the same Purpose might be produced.—Now such Exhortations, if they have any Meaning at all, plainly imply, that every Man must examine the *Bible* for himself, and is left at full Liberty to embrace that System of religious Faith which seems, upon the whole, the best to his own Judgment. But, if we were under an Obligation to wait for an *Act* of *Parliament* before we could form our Opinions upon the Subjects of Religion and venture to accept *Christianity*, the Exhortation of *Christ* and his *Apostles* with regard to this Point would have been expressed in a very different Manner, and not addressed, you may be sure, in such liberal and gentle Terms to their Disciples.

But this Supposition of the *Magistrate's* Prerogative in the Affairs of Religion is contradicted also by the uniform Practice of our Lord, who constantly cried out: *Who hath Ears to hear, let him hear*†: making his Appeal to the native Candour of his Audience, and to the unprejudiced Feelings of their Hearts: disclaiming all *Force*, but that of *Argument*; and exerting no *Influence*, but that of *Truth*.

Add to these Considerations, that the *Son of God* is said to make us free† by the Gospel:—That Gospel itself is emphatically stiled, the perfect Law of LIBERTY ||; and *Christians* are delivered thereby into the GLORIOUS LIBERTY of the Sons of God§. I forbear quoting many more similar Passages from the *Scriptures*, all of them, in their Principles, fundamentally and totally inconsistent with any Jurisdiction, but that of GOD HIMSELF, over the *Minds* and *Consciences* of Men. Such a Slavery of the Soul would be more iniquitous; and ten-times more insufferable to the Dignity of a noble Spirit, ten-times more ignominious and galling to an *Englishman*, than the Condition of a *Negro Slave*: An Epitome of all that is abject, forlorn and wretched among Men!

4. You may remember also, that our *Saviour*, in his Examination before *Pontius Pilate*, declared in plain Terms,

* Luke xii. 57. † Matt. xiii. 9. ‡ John viii. 36.
 || James i. 25. § Rom. viii. 21.

" *My Kingdom is not of this World**: My Gospel has no Connection with that *changeable Policy*, and those *interested Views*, by which the perishable *Kingdoms of the Earth* are influenced and supported: but is conducted by Principles conformable to that Throne, on which my Empire is established—the *Hearts and Consciences of Mankind*." This *fine Gold*† will not incorporate with the *Hay and Stubble*‡ and base Materials of human *Laws and Establishments*. Religion is a *Covenant* between the *Individual* and his *Maker*; a *Transaction of the HEART*; whose *Praise, or Blame*, in this Respect, *is not of Man but of God*§.

And, in my Opinion, the Apostle *Paul*, who was animated by a noble Spirit of Independence, and stood forth a most zealous Advocate on every Occasion for the religious Liberties of Mankind; *St. Paul*, I say, appears to me to have had in View this Declaration of his Master,—*My Kingdom is not of this World*,—when he speaks of the good Confession, which *Christ Jesus* witnessed before *Pontius Pilate*||. Surely it was a Declaration worthy of the particular Notice and Commendation of this illustrious Son of Freedom: Worthy of being written, not *on Paper with Pen and Ink*¶, but with the *graving Tool of GOD HIMSELF, on the fleshy Tables of the Heart***.

REMEMBER, therefore, my Fellow-Citizens, to stand fast in the Liberty, with which *Christ* hath made you free††; and, in Defence of your Conduct against all the Arguments for all the *Test-Acts* and *civil Establishments of Religion* upon Earth, boldly, make this short but unanswerable Reply:—MY KINGDOM IS NOT OF THIS WORLD.

Delightful Spectacle! to see *Christianity* and *Liberty* such inseparable Companions!

But it is Time for me to proceed to the Consideration of the *second Proposition*, upon which the *Test-Act* is founded: viz.

II. That the Religion of the *Church of England* is the true Religion of the *Scriptures*.

* John xviii. 36.

† Psalm xix. 10.

‡ 1 Cor. iii. 12.

§ Rom. ii. 29.

¶ 1 Tim. vi. 13.

|| John Epist. ii. 12: iii. 13.

** 2 Cor. iii. 3.

†† Gal. v. i.

Upon

Upon this Head also I shall endeavour to be as short as possible, and to detain you no longer than is necessary for the Establishment and Illustration of the Subject before us. I shall then leave you *as wise Men to judge what I say**, and to *act* accordingly: taking this Observation with you, that *Religion* is no *Trifle*, no variable unimportant Thing, which we may change and modify with as much indifference, and as often, as our Dress; but that Rule of Life, by which we shall be sentenced at the last Day to unspeakable Happiness, or to *everlasting Shame and Contempt†*, in the Presence of Men and Angels.

1. *Moses*, in a Tone of unusual Earnestness and Authority exclaims to the *Israelites* in the Wilderness, *Hear, O! Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord‡*. And our Saviour bears his Testimony to the Truth and Importance of this Doctrine, as you may see in Mark xii. 29.—The Prophet *Zechariah* declares§, that a Day will come, when the Lord shall be King over all the Earth; when there shall be ONE Lord and his Name ONE. St. Paul repeatedly asserts, that to us there is but ONE GOD the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ||. As for our Saviour himself, even after his Ascension, when John fell at his Feet to worship him¶, he refused this Homage, as due only to his Father: See thou do it not, says he; I am THY FELLOW-SERVANT, and OF THY BRETHREN**. For it is manifest from Revelations i. 11. 20. that the Angel, who talked with John, was no other than Jesus himself. But I need not be anxious upon this Point. Every Page of Scripture is full of this sublime and essential Article of Faith; and no Subject whatever is more frequently inculcated and more earnestly insisted upon, by our Lord himself in all his Discourses, than his Subordination to the Father, and his absolute Dependence upon God for all his Powers. In this capital Truth of the Jewish and Christian Revelations the wisest and most virtuous Philosophers, both of ancient and modern Times, Greeks, Romans, and Arabians, have uniformly coincided; as a Doctrine perfectly agreeable to the clearest Deductions of

* 1 Cor. x. 15. † Dan. xii. 2. ‡ Deut. vi. 4.
§ C. xiv. ver. 9. || 1 Cor. viii. 4. 6. 1 Tim. ii. 5. &c.
¶ Rev. xix. 10. ** As Heb. ii. 11. 17.

undepraved Reason, to every Principle of Common-sense: so that if *one* or *two* Passages, of *doubtful Construction*, and of *weak Authority*, can be produced from the Scriptures in contradiction to these *plain* and *numerous* Texts, you may be sure, either that they are *misinterpreted*, or *spurious*: yes, as sure as that *Reason* and *Religion* cannot possibly be at Variance---that the GOD of TRUTH cannot CONTRADICT HIMSELF. Nay, further: If any *Priest*, or even *Angel from Heaven*, should teach a Doctrine inconsistent with the UNITY of GOD,—an Article of Faith established by such explicit and abundant Evidence; this *single Circumstance* would counterbalance all other Arguments in Favour of his Pretensions; and would prove, that *such* Religion could never come from *Jehovah*, who cannot LIE*—with whom is no VARIABleness nor Shadow of Turning†:—who is A JEALOUS GOD‡, and will not give his Glory to ANOTHER§.

But what does the *Church of England*, with whom all *Officers* are required to *communicate*, teach her Members upon this Subject? She tells them, and enjoins Belief, upon Pain of *perishing everlastingly*, (observe Christian Reader! this Specimen of her CHARITY) that “the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God||:” that our Saviour “*Christ* was *very God* and *very Man*:” or to make use of equivalent Words, that he possessed all the natural *Weaknesses* of *Mortality*, and all the infinite and incomprehensible *Perfections* of the *Godhead* at the SAME TIME. A Proposition, than which, I think, distempered Reason could not possibly have devised one more tremendously shocking, and more superlatively absurd. It is indeed the very Perfection of Blasphemy and Folly.

But stop Reader, some zealous Son of the *Church* is coming forward to tell you, with a grave Face and in a serious Tone, that *this* Account, which I have just given you, is “a most barefaced and scandalous Misrepresentation of the Matter: that our *Church* maintains indeed, “ that *the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost*

* Heb. vi. 18. † James i. 17. ‡ Exod. xx. 5.

§ Isaiah xlii. 8.

|| The *Athanasian Creed*; the 1st, 2d and 5th *Articles* of Religion, and the Book of *Common Prayer* throughout.

"is God; but that these THREE put together make but "ONE God." What can I say more? If your *Faith*, or rather (you must excuse the Freedom of the Expression) if your *Credulity*, is of a Size to receive such a monstrous Proposition as this, no Arguments, that I have in Store, will find Admission into your Understandings. Answer, me, however, a *single* Question. Should a Man tell you that there are *three* Churches in Nottingham, *St. Mary's*, *St. Peter's*, and *St. Nicholas's*; and, in the same Breath, insist upon it, with a solemn Countenance, these *three* Churches are only *one* Church; could you believe him *serious*? Would you not imagine, that he was proposing to you some *Riddle* for a Trial of your Ingenuity; or took you for a downright Idiot, by offering such an Insult to your Understanding, in asserting that *three* is *one*, and *one* is *three*?

This is *one* Specimen of the Agreement between the Doctrines of the *Church of England* and the *Scriptures*; that *Church*, which exacts, notwithstanding, a Conformity to her Worship under Pain of certain Dangers, and Penalties, and Disqualifications, subversive of natural Justice, extremely prejudicial to our Interests as Members of Society, tending to estrange us from the Good-Will and affectionate Intercourse of our Fellow-Citizens, and depriving us of those Privileges and Encouragements, which are the Claim and Birth-Right of all peaceable Citizens and good Subjects.

But it will not be amiss, as we have entered upon this interesting Subject, to give *another* Specimen or *two* of the Doctrines of our *Church*; that you may be the better enabled to judge of the Reasonableness of her Pretensions to *evangelical Purity* in Faith and Worship, and, in Consequence thereof, of her *Decency* and *Propriety*, in ENFORCING her Opinions on Mankind. This is a copious Argument: but I shall confine myself to very few Particulars.

2. In a System of Faith, called the *Apostles' Creed*, and in her *third Article*, the *Church of England* asserts, that *Christ descended into Hell*. This, like the preceding Doctrine of a *Trinity in Unity*, is an unclean Remnant of the Garment of *Popery*, from which but a few Shreds only were cut away at the *Reformation*; and, like the same Doctrine too, utterly unknown to the first Age of *Christianity*

tianity. What Business *Christ* had in *Hell*, a Place of Punishment, prepared for the Devil and his Angels*—*Christ*, who knew no Sin†—who finished his Work‡ given him by God—the beloved Son, in whom the Father was well pleased§; what Business, I say, our Lord *Jesus* had THERE, I never yet could understand; and should be glad to learn from those, who have been more successful in searching the *Scriptures* for this Doctrine, than myself. Surely, it is very unconscionable in us to blame *Papists* for sending good *Christians* to *Purgatory*, when we *Protestants* send thither without Scruple, the *Lamb of God*|| himself.

3. *Original Sin* is another Doctrine of the *Church of England*; by which we are taught, that “every Person born into this World deserveth God’s Wrath and Damnation¶.” This Notion has no better foundation, for its Support, than some Passages of *Scripture*, most grossly misunderstood, as all Interpreters of any Learning will readily allow. But what Occasion is there at all for Learning to decide upon a Point, which the *Scriptures* will enable us to settle at once with no other Interpreter than plain Common-Sense? Does not our Lord exhort his Disciples to become as little Children**? Did he not take up little Children in his Arms, put his Hands upon them, and bless them? Could he POSSIBLY have recommended Infants to our Imitation for Innocence and Simplicity, if they were born in Sin, and worthy of eternal Damnation? Monstrous abominable Doctrine! execrable by every Parent! a wicked Libel upon God and *Christ*, and human Nature! But tell me, is not the Precept and Example of your Saviour more worthy of Regard than the Opinions of superstitious and ignorant Interpreters of the *Scriptures*?—In short, I leave the Matter to this Issue between you and the *Church of England*, in the Words of *Elijah* to the People: *How long halt ye between two Opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him, but if Baal, then follow him*††.

* Matt. xxv. 41. † 1 Pet. ii. 22. ‡ John xvii. 4.

§ Matt. iii. 17. || John i. 29. ¶ Article the 9th.

** Matt. xviii. 3. †† 1 Kings xviii. 21.

4. I shall content myself with *one* Instance more of the Agreeableness of the *Church-of-England* Doctrines with the *Scriptures*: and this shall be brought from the *Sacrament*, as it is called, which is imposed upon all *Officers civil and military* by the *Test-Act*.

The Gospel informs us, that the *Lord's Supper* was appointed by *Christ* himself, and, in Words as plain and precise as Language can adopt, merely for the *Commemoration* of his *Death* upon the Cross for the Sins of Mankind. Nor is *any Benefit whatsoever* annexed either by *Jesus* or his *Apostles* to the Celebration of this simple Ceremony, but what may be reasonably expected from a serious and conscientious Performance of any religious Duty. If our *Church* will maintain that some *extraordinary Benefits* are annexed to this Rite, let her Sons produce me the Passages of *Scripture*, which propound this Doctrine: for I can as well admit Infallibility in a *Pope*, who is *always in the Right*, as in an established *Church*, which is *never in the Wrong*. I see no Difference between them. The same Respect is due, in all Cases, to mere *Pharisaical Traditions* and *Commandments of Men**.

But what Ideas of this Institution does the *Church of England* inculcate upon her Disciples? Instead of adhering to the plain Account of the *Evangelists*† and *St. Paul*‡, she distinguishes the *Lord's Supper* by the strange Denomination of HOLY MYSTERIES§; as if something most inconceivably dark and solemn were comprehended in it. Hence the Minds of the Generality of her Members are saddened by a superstitious Horrour at the Idea of Communion with the Body and Blood of *Christ* under the Symbols of *Bread* and *Wine*, employed for no other Purpose than for that of a more lively and exact Representation to the *Senses* of the *Body*, which was *broken*, and the *Blood*, which was *shed*, for our Benefit.

Not only so, but *receiving of the Sacrament*, to use their own Phrase, is holden forth as an *Atonement* of all our *Sins*: a Blessing this no where promised in the *Law* or the *Gospel*, but to *Repentance* and *Reformation*:—and we are

* Matt. xv. 9. † Luke xxii. 19. ‡ 1 Cor. xi. 24.

§ In the Communion Service.

exhorted by the *Church* to confess our Sins, and open our Grief, that we may receive ABSOLUTION, truly, from the *Minister*. This I can myself consider in no other Light than that of an *impious Usurpation* of the Authority of God, whose SOLE PREROGATIVE it is to *forgive Sins*; a Prerogative indeed sometimes delegated for great Purposes to *Apostles* commissioned by him, and able to work *Signs and Wonders* in Proof of their Commission:—but no where given, as far as my Reading can discover, to the *Clergy* of the *Church of England*. — *Will not the Lord visit for these Things?* — *He will surely visit.*

I might point out some other superstitious Abuses of this Ceremony in our *Establishment*; but it is a most unpleasant Employment to expose the Absurdities of our Brother-Christians, and what no generous Person, who values the Good-Will of his Fellow-Citizens, would undertake but from a superior Regard to Truth, and an earnest Desire of diffusing its Benefits in Society; which are above all Price.

I have now gone through my intended Examination of the *two* Points, on which the Propriety of the *Test-Act* must be founded. Some other miscellaneous Observations, suggested by the Letter of the *Junior-Council*, shall conclude this *Address*.

The *Insufficiency* of the *Test-Act* to accomplish its *End* may justly be insisted upon amongst other Arguments; and is manifest indeed from the slightest Consideration. Its Intention was, as we have seen, “the Security of the *Church* “from Perils of *Non-Conformists* of every Denomination.” Many a conscientious *Dissenter* from the *Church*, we cannot doubt, qualifies for his Office from an Idea, that a Compliance, for *once*, in this *single Instance*, is of no great Moment; or from other Motives, which I cannot be supposed able to know and enumerate. But does this *Dissenter* become hereby more friendly to the *Church*, less likely to oppose her Interests, and thus secure her from those *Perils*, so greatly apprehended by her Members? No such Thing: his Mind suffers no Alteration in *this* Respect. If any Effect arise, it is that of *Resentment* at such an unreasonable Constraint on his Inclinations, and so unjustifiable an Oppression of his Conscience.—This Argument is still
more

more forcible in the Case of a *Dissenter* so commendably scrupulous, as to forego an *Office* in Society in Preference to such Compliance.

On the other Hand, a *Dissenter* of no Principle, like abandoned Characters of every other Denomination, conforms to the Discipline of this Church, or any Church, with perfect Indifference, whenever his *worldly Interest* can be promoted by it. But in what Sense can the Church be a Gainer by such a Conformity, or secured from any *Perils*?

Nothing, therefore, can be more undeniably evident, than that the Church-Establishment is delivered from no *Peril* in either of these Instances, and that the *Test-Act* is a mere Nullity with Respect to the Object, which it professes to have in View.

But, in the mean Time, is it possible for a Minister of the Church of England, who reflects with becoming Seriousness upon the Dignity of his Function, and the Solemnity of a significant and pathetic Rite, instituted by *Christ* himself at such an awful Period; can any Clergyman, I say, under these Circumstances, administer the Body and Blood of his Redeemer to one who is either a *lukewarm Communicant*, a vile Prevaricator, or an abandoned Profligate, without being shocked at becoming the Instrument of such an abominable Profanation; and without crying out like *Moses*, “*I exceedingly fear and quake* *?” And yet this Clergyman is bound at his Peril to comply!

Such is the Embarrassment, my Fellow-Citizens! into which the Generosity of the *Junior-Council* is desirous of bringing the worthy Pastors of our Town! But I would fain hope that a little Reflection will lead to an Acknowledgment of their Error. Certainly every Person not divested of Humanity and Goodness, would be sorry to drive his bitterest Enemy into a Difficulty like this! — O! my Soul, come not thou into their Secret!

Another Observation will place the *Test Act* in a very ridiculous Point of View. What is Non-Conformity in England is in Scotland the established Church; and we of the Church of England, as soon as we pass the *Tweed*, be-

* Heb. xii. 21.

come *Dissenters*; for during our Passage across that River, we are neither one Thing nor another, neither *Dissenters* nor *Churchmen*, but a Mongrel-Kind of *Christian*, for whom our Language has not yet found a Name. And is it not a great Hardship upon our *North-Country* Brethren, when they journey, as *Abraham* did, *towards the South-Country**, that they must be forced to renounce *their* religious Forms for *ours*, or give up the pleasing Objects for which they came among us, and to which they are entitled as well as ourselves? But *Truth* has nothing particularly to do with *national Establishments* of Religion. It is to *Force* alone, that *they* owe Support: and let but the Tide of popular Fury once be turned, and a *good Christian* under the *Protectorate* starts up in a Moment an *incurrible* Heretic at the *Restoration*. Can your Imagination conceive a more insupportable Insult on the Sense and Reason of Mankind?

Your *Junior-Council*, my Friends! think the *Test-Act* "founded on Wisdom." They will do, I am sure, a great and public Service, and *myself* among the first will be forward to acknowledge the Obligation, if they would condescend to communicate to their less knowing Brethren those *strong Reasons*, which have so happily led *their* Understandings to this *wise Conclusion*. It is *selfish*, it is *ungenerous*, nay, it is *unchristian*, thus to *hide their Candle under a Bushel*. Let them *place it on a Candlestick*, that it may give *Light to all that are in the House*.

Your "*Junior-Council* disclaim," they tell us, "all "*Animosity*" on this Occasion: they are actuated merely by public Spirit,—by a Regard for "*the Laws and Constitution of their Country*." They know their own Motives best; and, for my Part, I think it would be uncandid to disbelieve them. Nevertheless, merely as a Subject of amusing *Speculation*, upon the Supposition that their Motives had not been avowed, to what Cause *might* a suspicious Enquirer into their Conduct have *possibly* attributed this Measure at the present Juncture? This uncharitable *Speculator* would, doubtless, derive a Solution in his own Mind from the Event of a late Election. "The trivial

* Gen. xx. 1.

"Inferiority of 22 to 26," he would say within himself,
 "has filled them with an over-weening Conceit of their
 "own Strength and Influence, and has encouraged them,
 "without waiting the slow Process of *Elections*, to a *speedy*
 "Overthrow of their Antagonists by dislodging them from
 "their Stations with the Artillery of the *Church*. But the
Junior-Council would do well," he would rejoin, (for the
 Reader should remember, that a *fictitious* Character is speak-
 ing) "they would do well to consider, that most of those
 "Gentlemen, who by a Train of Circumstances unfore-
 "seen and unconcerted, were accidentally joined with the
 "*Junior-Council* in the Support of the same Candidate,
 "are endued with a Liberality of Manners, which will
 "make them among the first to express their Indignation
 "at this violent and unjust Procedure. They opposed the
 "successful Candidates upon Motives totally distinct, as it
 "should seem, from those of the *Junior-Council*. It was
 "no Predilection for *Toryism* or *Church Dominion*, that
 "engaged *them* in this Contest; but a Persuasion, whether
 "well-founded or not, that our present Magistracy have
 "not exerted themselves with a Warmth and Patriotism,
 "that would have done them Honour, in promoting those
 "Schemes of public Utility and Convenience, so suitable to
 "their Station, and so practicable by their Influence and
 "Resources. Nor, I apprehend, were the Operations of
 "these Gentlemen directed so much by any Impressions of
 "*Whig* or *Tory* upon their Minds, as by a pure Desire of
 "advancing such liberal and respectable Characters, as were
 "likely to engage with Spirit in furthering the Welfare of
 "their Native Town, and the Benefit of Society at large.
 "If such Reflections as these had occurred to the *Junior-*
Council, they would not have discovered any Reason to
 "congratulate themselves upon the flattering Issue of the
 "late Contest."

However, let your *Junior-Council* be as free from Ani-
 mosity, as they wish us to think them, a small Share of
 Experience, and a very moderate Portion of Understanding,
 might have informed these Gentlemen, that *Compulsion* of
 this Nature never *can* answer any valuable Purpose; and
 never *did*, since the Foundation of the World. Irritation

on

on one Part, Acrimony on the other, and inflamed Antipathy on both, are invariably the blessed Fruits of every Sort of Persecution. Besides the notorious *Imprudence* of such Opposition; which usually tends to *establish* the obnoxious Point. *Truth*, and indeed *Opinion* in general, is like an impetuous River: if you stop its Current, it overwhelms the Country with its Inundation.

And a very slender Proficiency indeed must that Man have made in the Study of CHRISTIANITY, who has not learned, how inconsistent such Roughness is with the Spirit of his Religion: a Religion which breathes Nothing but mutual Forbearance, Meekness, Gentleness, Love and Peace. *Lord!* said the Disciples, *wilt thou that we command Fire to come down from Heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But Jesus turned, and rebuked them, and said: Ye know not what Manner of Spirit ye are of: for the Son of Man is not come to destroy Men's Lives, but to save them**. Our Henry the Seventh always began his Treaties with this memorable Sentence; "When *Christ* came into the World, *Peace* was sung; when he left the World, *Peace* was bequeathed." See Luke ii. 14. John xiv. 27.

It is truly lamentable for a feeling Heart to observe among Mankind so little Consideration for the Ease and Happiness of others! so great a Display of Conceit, Intolerance, and Selfishness! such an Insensibility to the generous Precepts and universal Benevolence of the Gospel! such a Blindness to our own Faults and Imperfections! so little Indulgence to the Wants and Weaknesses of poor distressed human Nature!—Oh! that the Day would come, when every grosser Passion should be burnt up on the Altar of *Christian Love*! when all Hatred and Animosity should be rooted from the Earth! when the Spirit of Faction should be swallowed up in Unanimity and patriotic Virtue! when the great and only Object of Ambition among FELLOW-CITIZENS should be—THE GOOD OF THE COMMUNITY.

* Luke ix. 54—57.

Nottingham, October 26, 1789.

C

POSTSCRIPT.

P O S T S C R I P T.

Upon referring to *Blackstone*, who is my Authority for what is advanced on the Subject of the *Test-Act*, I believe myself to be in an Error, when I rank the Members of a *Corporation* under the Head of *civil Officers*. This seems not to be the Language of the Law. The *Act* immediately connected with the Occasion of this Address, is the *Corporation-Act*; by "which no Person can be legally elected to any Office in a Corporation, unless, within a Twelve-month before, he has received the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper according to the Rites of the Church of England; or, in Default of this, such Election shall be void."—No Sort of Difference, with Regard to any Arguments employed in this Address, is occasioned by this Mistake upon a Subject of Law, with which I declare myself totally unacquainted; as it has been my Endeavour rather to acquire a Knowledge of the noble Sentiments of *Poets*, *Philosophers*, and *Prophets*, than of the Craft and Nonsense of Lawyers and Politicians. Besides, if I am rightly informed the *Junior-Council* intend to direct their Prosecution by the *Test-Act*; so that my Misapprehension is still less to be regretted.

AN

A P P E N D I X, &c.

SINCE the Publication of my late *Address to the Inhabitants of Nottingham*, some Observations have occurred to me, either from my own Reflections or the Conversation of others, which, as they may contribute to an Enforcement and Illustration of the Argument in Question, may rectify some Misconstructions, and excite farther Attention to Subjects little considered and less understood, but most interesting to every Member of Society, as a *rational Creature*, as an *Englishman*, and as a *Christian*; I shall, without farther Preface, communicate to my Fellow-Citizens, whose Information alone has been my Object in this Business.

One of the *Junior-Council*, whom I need not specify by Name, upon premising that he possesses an Acuteness of Understanding and a Degree of Information, worthy of a better Cause, entered one Day into an amicable Debate with me upon the Subject of my Address; a Debate, highly honourable to him after the unceremonious Manner, in which I had criticised and censured his Conduct. I will exhibit the Substance of our Conversation with all the Fidelity, of which Candour and Memory are capable; for I am not sure, that I had always a clear Apprehension of his Meaning, and should be extremely sorry for any Misrepresentation of it to his Disadvantage.

1. Though *Blackstone* expressly declares “the *Corporation* and *Test-Acts* to be the two Bulwarks erected to secure the *established Church* against Perils from *Non-Conformists* of all Denominations,” and I could not conceive that a different Idea was entertained by any Person whatsoever of their Object, my Opponent thought it an Error in me to view these Acts in any *other* Light, than as a Security

curity to the *State*. This Notion is, I think, wholly *false*: and, I am sure, *vain* and *frivolous*.

Our Constitution is composed of a *Church* and a *State*. Now Government, I presume, means to secure the *State* by the Oaths of *Abjuration*, *Allegiance*, and *Supremacy*; and the *Church*, by a Compliance with that Ceremony, which implies *Communion* with her Worship. Is not this a natural and intelligible Discrimination? If so, what more erroneous than the Objection before us?

But, when the *State* has secured herself by these Oaths of *Abjuration*, *Allegiance*, and *Supremacy*; why enjoin an additional *Test* on her Members, but with a View to the Security of her Ally the *Church*, by the Intervention of a *religious* Ceremony? Surely it were superfluous and unnecessary. To pretend, therefore, that this Act of enjoining the *Lord's Supper* on *civil Officers and Magistrates* is merely with a View to the *State*, which at the same Time cannot be separated from the *Church*, is a most idle Distinction without a Difference; a mere verbal Allegation; or to me perfectly unintelligible.

Indeed, the very Notion of a Constitution compounded of a *Church*, (that is, a System of religious Faith and Worship, erected on a *private Interpretation* of the Scriptures) and a *State*, is in reality a Begging of the Question; and *pre-supposes* that Power of *religious Jurisdiction*, which I totally disallow, and for which no Government under Heaven can produce me its *Authority*.

2. My Opponent was also of Opinion, that the *Test* of the *Lord's Supper* ought to be regarded as a merely *political Act*. It is employed, to be sure, by the *civil Magistrate* for his own *worldly Purposes*; but let any Man *assert*, or rather *believe*, if he can, that an Institution ordained by *Christ* himself for a Commemoration of his own Death — an Institution peculiarly *religious*, and as distinct from every Thing *political* as the *twelve Apostles* of Nazareth from the *six Junior-Council* of Nottingham:—let any Man, I say, consider this Institution as a mere *political Ordinance*, if he can.

3. But “the supreme Power in a State has a Right to impose what *Tests* it pleases upon the Subject.” To which I answer: If it can be proved, that the *Conscience* of a Man

a Man, under the Perception of moral and religious Truth, is, or can be, cognizable by human Authority, or that God is not *exclusively* concerned in this Matter, as *the Searcher of the Heart*; then may this *Omnipotence* of the *Magistrate* be justifiably maintained and exerted. Otherwise, he must not only have the *Power* of effecting what is *impracticable*, but the *Right* also of doing *Wrong*; which is absurd enough.

Our *Junior-Council*, who profess an Intention of executing the *qualifying Laws for Offices, upon public Ground—in Defence of the Constitution of their Country*—might have known, that there are *Duties*, owed by us to God and to ourselves, antecedent and superior to all *civil Power* upon Earth; and that those *Injunctions of civil Magistrates*, which contradict any explicit *Doctrine of Morality*, are from the first, to all Purposes and in every Sense, NULL and VOID. The Rule of Conduct in this Case, for good *Christians* and honest Men, is plain and obvious. What *Socrates* said to the *Athenians*, when they required him not to confute and expose the *established Superstitions* of his Country;—what *Peter* and *John* replied to the *Jewish Magistrates*, when commanded by them not to teach in the Name of *Jesus**;—that Answer must be made by every resolute and upright Citizen, when a *Test* inconsistent with the *Prerogative of God*, and the *Immunities of Conscience*, is enjoined upon him by the *Legislature of his Country*; “IT IS BETTER TO OBEY GOD THAN MAN.”

Besides, that Opinion of the Authority of a *Magistrate* to require what *Test* of Obedience he may please, is, in another Respect, pregnant with Wickedness and Absurdity. By this Rule of *Power* giving *Right*, the *Protestant*, the *Popish*, the *Mahometan*, the *Idolatrous Magistrate*, is authorised to establish that Form of Religion, which they severally prefer; and consequently the *Worship of Images*, or of *three Gods* instead of *one*, may be lawfully enjoined on their respective Subjects: or, in other Words, the *Magistrate* has a Right to oppose and counteract all the Aims of the *Divine Administration* in the different *Dispensations*

* Acts iv. 18.

of Religion for the Reformation of Mankind since the Foundation of the World. A delightful Exercise indeed of the *Magistrate's* Authority!—Now what is the clear Inference from this? What, but that the *Magistrate* has NO POWER AT ALL over *Religion* and the *Conscience*.

4. “But the *Magistrate* is guilty of no Injustice: he “*compels* no Man to comply.”—It is surprising, how some People can impose upon themselves with mere *Words* destitute of Meaning! Compel? Why, no: he does not *compel* me à *Coup de Baton*, with a *Cudgel* in his Hand. But is there no *Compulsion* but in a *Cat-o-nine Tails*? If he lays such Temptations in my Way, as Experience proves to be in general too powerful for the Integrity and Magnanimity of human Nature, he as effectually *compels* me, in all Propriety of Speech, as by an Act of *Violence*. Nay, *more* effectually: for Numbers are overcome by these gentle Seductions of worldly Interest, whose generous Spirits would have been roused at once to Resistance by a tyrannical Effort of Authority. To talk, therefore, of *Non-Compulsion*, in this Case, is a mere verbal Sophistry, and an Insult to Common-Sense.

Suppose, however, merely as a Work of *Supererogation*, we expose by a particular Example this capital Argument of *Compulsion*: to which I feel the greater Inclination, as it affords me an Opportunity of illustrating a Passage of the *New Testament*.

When those who had been invited to partake of the Supper in the Parable*, refused to attend, the Master sent his Servants into the High-Ways to COMPEL all, whom they found, to come in, that the House might be filled.

Now what is the Purport of this Relation? Why truly, that the *Jews* would reject the Gospel, but that its Evidences would be received by the *Gentiles*; and act upon their Minds with such *Efficacy* as might be justly said to COMPEL them to receive it. And will any reasonable Person find Fault with this sensible Use of the Word COMPULSION; because the *Gentiles* were not CUDGELLED into an Acceptance of *Christianity*? Away with your *Test-*

* Luke xiv. 16—25.

Laws, say I, if they must be defended with such pitiful Quirks as this !

5. " But, if every Man were left to his own Discretion " in religious Matters, universal *Confusion* would ensue."— Pshaw ! A mere *Bugbear* to frighten old Women and Children ! The Fear of *Confusion* is the stale Pretence of *religious* and *political Bigots* of all Denominations, to oppose and decry *Reformations* of every Kind whatever ; which will always, notwithstanding, be going on, in Spite of Bigotry, as long as the World endures. But I answer plainly : No Matter what ensues. If the Principles of your *Test-Laws* be wrong and indefensible, they *ought* to be abandoned. Who is not acquainted with this essential and universal Maxim of Morality—" Never do *Evil* that *Good* may come*?" Let Man act uprightly, in Conformity to the Dictates of Reason and Religion ; and trust *Consequences* to the Providence of God, who does not wish his Schemes to be promoted by *Folly* and *Injustice*, and the Violation of his own Laws. But it is not likely, that any *bad Consequences* would ensue from a complete Enjoyment of *Christian Liberty*. It is a SATIRE upon the SUPREME BEING to suppose it. On the Contrary, Nothing else, but this unwarrantable Imposition of one Man's Opinions upon another, has been the Cause of all those terrible Persecutions, and Imprisonments, and Assassinations, and Martyrdoms, and Massacres, which are related in every Page of the *ecclesiastical Historian* ; but alas ! in vain, for the Admonition of Posterity.

In the mean Time, we will allow, for the Sake of Argument, that *Confusion*, as the Phrase is, *would* arise from this Liberty of Conscience, for which I declare myself an unreserved Advocate. Who is there so inexperienced as not to know, that some previous Fermentation in human Affairs is necessary to their Refinement ? *Peace* is indeed a Possession of great Value, but would be dearly purchased at the Expence of *Truth* and *Liberty*. Nay, *that Peace* seems to be but spurious and imperfect, which is not the Offspring of *Confusion*. To *Confusion* we are indebted for

* Rom. iii. 8.

the greatest Blessings of Life, and the noblest Enjoyments of our Nature. What but *Confusion* preserves the Waters of the Ocean from Putrefaction, and the Atmosphere from Pestilence? To what Cause must we ascribe the Establishment of *British* Liberty, and the Security of those Privileges, which have rendered us the Praise and Envy of the Earth? To *Confusion*.—Even the Propagation of the blessed Gospel was impracticable without *Confusion*. The Apostles excited a *Hue and Cry*, wherever they went. *These*, said the *Jews*, *that have TURNED THE WORLD UPSIDE DOWN, are come hither also**. Was not this a MOST DESIRABLE *Confusion*? Oh! for a little more *Confusion* of the same sort!—No Man of Sense will suffer his Judgment to be abused by the base Coin of *evil Words*, maliciously circulated to discredit *good Things*, and issued from the Mint of timid and lazy Men, to run down the sterling Gold of Adventurers more resolute and active than themselves.

The Truth is, our *civil Governors*, by no Means *overburdened*, God knows, with Religion themselves, care not one Farthing about this or that System of it; and only prize it as a political Engine to serve their own vile Purposes of Interest or Ambition. Magistrates of all Times are much alike. As it was *eighteen hundred Years* ago, so it is now. *Gallio careth for none of these Things†*. They heartily detest *Reformers* and *Reformation*; and maintain the *established System* with a Zeal exactly proportionate to its Corruptions and their own. *For every one that doeth Evil hateth the Light, neither cometh to the Light, lest his Deeds should be reproved‡*.

So far my Reflections have been regulated by the Debate betwixt my Opponent and myself. I now pass on to some Observations unconnected with it.

As I should be wonderfully gratified by seeing an Engagement between two great Armies, though I take no Delight in Blood and Slaughter, and would not wish my Fellow-Creatures by any Means to knock each other on the Head for my Satisfaction and Amusement only; so I

* Acts xvii. 6.

† Acts xviii. 17.

‡ John iii. 20.

rejoice in this Measure of our *Junior-Council*, though I lament the Illiberality which gave it Birth. I sincerely hope, that those Members of our *Corporation*, who have not qualified for their Offices, will have the Spirit to adhere to their Purpose, that we may see, whether a *Court of Justice* will countenance this Prosecution, and venture in these enlightened Times to put such contemptible Laws in Execution. Indeed we have good Reason to hope a favourable Issue to the next Application of the *Dissenters* to the *House of Commons*, when we consider the gradual Disposition of that best Part of our Legislature to listen to their Petition. *Lord North*, it is true, though he would fain persuade us of his friendly Regard for *Liberty* and *Toleration*, still opposes their Claims with a Narrowness of Spirit, seldom associated with his great Accomplishments; and *Mr. Pitt*, who would do himself Honour by a closer Imitation of his Father's Virtues, exerts himself in the same Cause with unrelenting Stubbornness and Absurdity: but we fondly hope, that the popular and manly Eloquence of *Mr. Fox* will more than counterbalance the Authority of the Nobleman, and the contemptible Policy of the Minister. We are not quite so sanguine in our Expectations from the *House of Lords*. Though many of the present *Bishops* have shewn themselves highly respectable both for their Learning and Liberality of Sentiment, yet the *Episcopal Bench* in general is adverse both to *civil* and *religious* Reforms: and, in my Opinion, these *spiritual Guides* would be employed more suitably to their *evangelical* Function, in acquainting themselves with their Clergy, in patronizing modest Merit, which is starving on Curacies and pitiful Preferments, and in promoting good Manners in their several Dioceses, than in obsequious Attendance on a Court, and in the Turbulence of political Ambition. Certainly, however, our *Bishops* might vote for a complete Extension of religious Freedom in *England*, with as good a Grace, in the Capacity of *Protestant Prelates*, as for the Establishment of *Popery* at *Quebec*.

If, after all, there be any one *Truth* undeniably evident upon the clearest Principles of *Reason*, *Christianity*, and
found

sound *Policy*, in my Judgment it is this: That the *Magistrate* has NO Authority in *religious Concerns*: that every peaceable and conscientious Subject should be left at Liberty to serve God in his own Way, unembarrassed by such unjust Disabilities and Discouragements. But there never was yet any Proposition in Politics and Morals, how plain soever, which ingenious and disputatious Men might not controvert and puzzle to Eternity. All that remains, therefore, for the Advocates of Truth, is, to confirm our Sentiments with the best Arguments in our Power, and to place them in the most advantageous Light; then to leave them to the dispassionate Consideration of our Readers, to be accepted, or rejected, according to the Impression made upon their own Minds. This is certain: *Truth*, under the divine Administration, must gradually dispel the Shades of Error, and break through every Cloud, with which Prejudice, and Policy, and Priestcraft may obstruct her Radiance. She is that *shining Light, which will shine more and more unto perfect Day*.

Besides, one Fact no Man can deny; extremely worthy of Observation, and infinitely consolatory to the Mind. It is this. A Dissatisfaction with some of the capital Doctrines of the Church of England, and juster Notions of civil and religious Liberty, have been long and rapidly gaining ground both among the *established* Clergy themselves, and every other denomination of *Christians*. Come forward, ye Sons of Bigotry and Intolerance! and produce me that ERROR, which has been propagated and confirmed in Proportion to the Improvement of the human Faculties, and the Advancement of Philosophy and Science. If every *Clergyman*, who disapproves and disbelieves such Doctrines as that of a *Trinity* in *Unity*, *three* Gods in *one*, had the Resolution to avow his Sentiments and relinquish his Station in the *Church*, the *Establishment* would find herself deprived of more learned and respectable Members, than she would previously have imagined, or could well spare. But God has not given to every Man, any more than to *Erasmus*, the Spirit of *Martyrdom*; and may he, *who knows that we are but Dust*, make every Allowance

Allowance for the Infirmities of his Creatures in *that Day!* *His Kingdom cometh not with Observation**; but is daily establishing by imperceptible Operations, inconceivable and unknown to us. How far distant a more perfect Society amongst ourselves may be, no Man can tell. But the Transactions of a neighbouring Country will not suffer the most gloomy Imagination to Despair. In the mean Time, *HIS Will be done!*

But let no one conclude, as some are inclined to conclude, that, whilst I condemn *ecclesiastical Dominion* in Connection with the present *Church-Establishment*, I could wish it transferred to the *Dissenters*. No: I contend for an *absolute* and *universal Abolition* of this usurped Authority over the Consciences of Men, whatever the religious Creed of the Supreme Power may be; and plead for the Sovereignty of GOD ALONE in his own Kingdom. The *Dissenters*, it is true, of *one* Denomination in particular, (and few Men have enjoyed more Opportunities of knowing both *Churchmen* and *them* than myself) if we consider the Disadvantages of Education under which they comparatively labour, have at least *equalled* their Brethren of the *Establishment* in almost *every* Branch of Literature, and in enlarged Conceptions of *religious* and *civil Liberty* they are, in general, greatly their *Superiors*. But the *Dissenters* compose a Mass of very dissimilar Materials, and, at the best, have the Infirmities of other Men; and it may reasonably be doubted, whether *they*, as a Body, would make such a temperate Use of Power, or display upon the whole, such Moderation, as the *Church of England*. And, though I so much dislike many Parts of the Public Service of our *Church*, I find myself unable, at the same Time, to look with any Approbation upon the Mode of conducting public Worship in *dissenting Congregations*: and, considering their Situation as *Protestant-Dissenters*, and their Liberty to model their religious Services, as they think fit, divested of all those Impediments, which clog an *Establishment*; I cannot but regard their Conduct as exceedingly reprehensible and inconsistent, in neglecting those Advantages, that would accrue from a

* Luke xvii. 20.

liberal Use of their *Christian* Privileges, and from the Introduction of a corrected Version of the Scriptures: for without *this* Measure, *the Poor*, to whom *the Gospel* was particularly *preached**, that is, all the *unlearned* Part of Society, must still continue in Error with Respect to some essential Articles of *Christianity*, and under a Superstitious Credulity to the Dictates of *blind Guides*†.

Some of my Readers have been dissatisfied, and some have taken great Offence, at the Conclusion of that Part of my *Address* in p. 9. beginning with the Words—*But what*—and ending with the Words—*and Folly*. It is hardly worth While to explain one's-self to those who will not exercise their own Discernment in forming a just Estimate of the Spirit and Purport of a Passage: nor can it reasonably be expected of us Authors, that we should add to the Hardships of our sorry Occupation, by finding *Judgment*, as well as *Arguments*, for our Readers. Seriously, however, after a repeated, and, I trust, dispassionate Consideration of these Clauses, so exceptionable as it should seem, I feel no Inclination to qualify or retract them.

1. It ought to be observed, that I merely exercise a Right, which every Man may assert to himself, of delivering *my own Opinion* upon the *Proposition* as stated by myself without any *personal Asperities* whatsoever. Will it not be granted me, that *Practices* may be stigmatised with every Energy of Language by a Mind totally uninfected with the Distemper of *Malevolence*? Can we forget that the *Prince of Peace*, the *meek and lowly Saviour* of Mankind, poured forth all the Severities of indignant Expression upon the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, and again and again pronounced them *Fools* and *Hypocrites*? I know and respect many Individuals, who constantly acquiesce in what is criminal in itself without Criminality. *St. Paul* was a *Blasphemer* and a *Persecutor*, but he *obtained Mercy*, because he did it *ignorantly*, or rather *unwarily*, in *Unbelief*†. A Man may become a *Murderer* by depriving a Fellow-Creature of his Life, without bringing the Sin of *Blood-Guiltiness* upon himself. I could easily mention, for Instance, if it were

* Matt. xi. 5. † Matt. xxiii. 16. ‡ 1 Tim. i. 13.

not an invidious Distinction, several of the *established Clergy* of this Town, who are deservedly esteemed, both for their Liberality of Manners (untainted by that Bigotry of Soul, which feels no Affection but for those of their own Communion) and for their other Virtues; whom, nevertheless, I am compelled to regard as *practical Blasphemers*; if it be, as, I apprehend it is, a *Blasphemy* of the most enormous Size, to dethrone the unutterable Perfections of *Jehovah* from the *Heaven of Heavens* to the Tabernacle of a *human Body*, and to exalt a mere *Man* to the *Divinity*; nay, not a *Man* only, but a *Non-Entity*; making, against all Propriety of Speech,—all Philosophy,—all Common Sense,—the *Spirit of God* a *distinct Person* from *God himself*.

2. Many have connected frightful Ideas with the Word *Blasphemy*, without Authority. Ignorance sees through a Mist, and, of Course, the Object is magnified to the Eyes of her Imagination. The true Meaning of *Blasphemy* is simply *Evil Speaking*; and this is one Instance among many, of the Imperfection of our present Translation of the Scriptures, which misleads the Unlearned by the Use of unintelligible Terms. The *Scribes* charged *Jesus* with speaking *Blasphemies**, for exercising, by Virtue of his divine Commission, God's Prerogative of *forgiving Sins*: conceiving this Conduct to be an actual *Reviling* of the Deity, by usurping to himself this high Privilege of the Almighty. Exactly after the same Manner do they *blaspheme* the *Creator*, who ascribe *his* Perfections to a *Creature*.

3. It is only by a lively and glowing Representation of these irrational and unscriptural Persuasions in their true Colours, that inattentive Minds can be induced to reflect upon the Singularity of their Articles of Faith, and the Professors of the Truth be more firmly established in *sound Doctrine*. Tame and insipid Language is a Kind of *High-Treason* against the Majesty of the *royal Law*†, and is but too often a Proof of the Writer's Indifference to the most sublime and important Doctrines. Give me the Magnanimity of a *Luther*, wrapped up in the Rectitude of his Intentions, and keeping the Tenour of his Way, un-

* Mark ii. 7.

† James ii. 8.

dismayed by the fiery Zeal of his Enemies and the Coldness of his Friends, in Preference to a thousand such Men as *Erasmus* and *Melancthon*, with their temporizing Expedients and mean Concessions. *I know thy Works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then, BECAUSE THOU ART LUKEWARM, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my Mouth*†.

I have remarked before, that this Sort of tyrannizing over the Consciences of Mankind has been the Parent of Enormities as cruel and flagitious, as have sprung from any other infernal Principle whatever, which has ravaged Society in any Period, and extinguished the Blessings of human Life. And, I am clear, that, as far as Analogy, and History, and Experience will authorise this Conclusion (and beyond *their* Authority we can have no Right to form any Conclusions at all): I am clear, I say, in this, that the same Illiberality and Intolerance, which countenance and approve the iniquitous Oppression of the *Test-Laws*, or any *similar* Instance of Persecution, would in no long Time and by no very gentle Progress, be brought to exercise upon their *dissenting* Brethren even the Horrors of the *Papish Inquisition*, if the Mildness of our Government and the Temper of the Times would give Scope to their Dispositions. Yes: many a demure Hypocrite, who fancies himself, with the Reader's Leave, a true Disciple of the benevolent *Jesus*, would *roast* my *Body* for the Edification of my *Soul*, on the Score of my *Address* and this *Appendix*, as rendering thereby a most acceptable Service to the merciful Father of the human Race. I am conscious, however, and willingly acknowledge, that some Exception in Favour of *Individuals* should be made to this general Position. The *Effect* of vicious Principles is not always proportionate to their evil *Tendency*. They are, in many Cases, checked in their Operations, and even entirely repressed, by the countervailing Influence of superior Good-sense and native Sensibility of Heart. But no Man, however mild and generous his Dispositions, can answer for the Lengths, to which he might be carried, with Opportunities

* Rev. iii. 15, 16.

of indulging the Obliquities of his Understanding. Like *Hazael*, with Affections yet uncorrupted, he would be shocked at the Prospect of those Enormities, which would soon become habitual to his Feelings, and be daily practised without one single Sensation of Remorse. Of such infinite Importance to Society and ourselves, is the imbibing of just Sentiments, and a rational Rule of Life, undepraved by furious Zeal or gloomy Superstition!

And here I shall take Leave of my Reader and the Subject, unless some Antagonist, either in Behalf of the political or religious Constitution of his Country, which are thought to be *founded in such Wisdom*, should feel himself disposed to enter the Lists against me for a free Discussion of the Points in Question, and should exhibit his *real Name*.—If but one Individual shall have been induced by any Thing advanced in this *Pamphlet* to review and rectify a single Principle of his Conduct, I shall think my Time in writing it very happily laid out. Indeed, these dull Topics of Religion and Morality are not calculated, I am well aware, to interest the *Bulk* of Mankind whether the *great Vulgar*, or the *small*. Mere animal Existences! with Souls barely sufficient to keep their Bodies from Putrefaction, they jog on the High-Road of *Sense*, unseduced either to the right Hand, or to the left, by these unprofitable Speculations; *one to his Farm, and another to his Merchandise*.

Nottingham, Nov. 10, 1789.

Of J. Deighton, No. 274, Holborn, may be had the following Books by the same Author.

P. VIRGILII MARONIS Georgicon Lib. 4. Cantrabrigiæ, typis et sumtibus Academicis, 1788. Boards, 3s. 6d.

2. POEMATATA, Latine partim scripta, partim reddita, quibus accedunt quædam in Q. Horatium Flaccum Observationes Criticæ. 4to. 1776, fut 2s.

3. A New Translation of the Gospel of St. Matthew, with Notes, Critical, Philological, and Explanatory. 1781. 4to. Boards, 10s. 6d.

4. An Enquiry into the Opinions of the Christian Writers of the first Centuries, concerning the Person of Jesus Christ. 1784. 8vo. boards, 4s.

5. An Essay on Inspiration, considered chiefly with Respect to the Evangelists, 1781. sewed, 1s.

6. A New Translation of the Epistle of St. Paul to the Theſſalonians, with Notes, 6d.

7. A plain and short Account of the Nature of Baptiſm according to the New Testament, with a cursory Remark on Confirmation and the Lord's Supper. 6d.

8. A Sermon preached at Richmond, in Surry, July 29, 1784, a public Thanksgiving-Day. 6d.

9. Remarks on Dr. Horsley's Ordination Sermon, in a Letter to the Lord Bishop of Gloucester. 1788. 4d.

10. A new Translation of those Parts only of the New Testament, which are wrongly translated in our common Version. 2s. 6d. 1789.

11. Remarks on the Internal Evidences of the Christian Religion. 2s. 6d. 1789.

12. Silva Critica: five in Auctores sacros profanosque commentarius philologicus. Cantrabrigiæ, typis et sumtibus Academicis. 1789. Boards, 3s. 6d.

Also, sold by G. Kearſley, No. 46, Fleet-Street.

13. The Poems of Mr. GRAY, with Notes. 8vo.